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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [FR](#) [EZ](#) [PL](#)
SUBJECT: GOF: U.S. PUSHING FOR "TOO MUCH, TOO SOON" ON
MISSILE DEFENSE

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary. In two meetings on February 14, one with Philippe Carre, the Director of Strategic Affairs bureau at the MFA and the second with Philippe Errera, the Strategic Affairs Advisor to FM Kouchner, the French expressed disappointment that an agreement that they understood had been reached at a senior-level (between NSA Hadley and Elysee Diplomatic Advisor Jean-David Levitte) to work towards general language supporting missile defense had broken down in working-level meetings at NATO. In frank exchanges with ¶W. Bruce Weinrod, Secretary of Defense Representative in Europe and Defense Advisor to the U.S. Mission to NATO, both French representatives sought to place fault on the U.S. for the failure to find agreement at NATO on missile defense and asserted that France and other allies are not prepared to agree on language that would pre-judge the types of decisions that NATO will make in the future concerning missile defense protection. However, the GOF hopes that we can get the process back on track and find language sufficiently broad to meet all of the allies' expectations. Mr. Weinrod said that the U.S. also wants to find NATO agreement on missile defense. He noted that at Bucharest, the U.S. is looking for statements of principle and an agreement to develop recommended approaches, but not a commitment to financing or programmatic costs. End Summary.

¶2. (S) Carre began the first meeting by saying that a NATO endorsement of an alliance missile defense system entails big decisions about whether the alliance wants missile defense; if so, whether NATO should be responsible for it; and, finally, how such a system would be financed. France is prepared to support statements that a missile threat exists, that missile defense systems are one way of addressing this threat, and that U.S. system is making a contribution in this area. However, Carre stated firmly that France was not prepared to make "fundamental" decisions about whether NATO will acquire a missile defense system and the GOF does not think that such a significant decision needs to be made at the Bucharest summit. Therefore, he asserted that the GOF was surprised and dismayed at U.S. efforts last week to incorporate more far-reaching policy statements into technical documents being prepared for agreement at the Vilnius Defense Ministerial. Carre described this as "pushing for too much, too soon" on an artificial deadline and expressed French surprise at the unexpected invocation of the silence procedure. Errera agreed, and stated that the French attempts to express their reservations had resulted in the USG retreating into "trench warfare mode." Both men said that the GOF was "not saying no" to the U.S. desire for a NATO-component of a missile defense system, but that our effort to include broad policy statements into technical documents was pushing too quickly the timetable for making such important strategic decisions. In general, Carre took a

harder line and expressed doubt whether an agreement could be reached before Bucharest while Errera was more upbeat and suggested that an agreement should be reachable but with high-level engagement on the issues.

13. (S) Both Errera and Carre expressed understanding that the Czechs, and to some extent the Poles, need to be able to say that the MD components in their country would be the first step in a NATO system. However, they stressed that the alliance cannot, and should not, make a strategic decision based on short-term Czech domestic problems. Errera thought that the Allies could reassure the Czechs that a general statement of support was feasible. Carre asserted that it would suffice for Czech domestic purposes if the Bucharest statement simply "does nothing to contradict" the possible linkage of the two systems. Although, he stated further that the Czechs "cannot expect us to solve their problems" and France is not going to take a "fundamental political decision" just to help the Czechs. Weinrod responded that this was not simply a problem for the Czechs, and stressed that it was very important to the United States to see progress on this issue. He noted that indivisibility of security is a core NATO principle, and should be reflected in how NATO addresses missile defense. He added that no decisions on programs or funding are needed or expected. Carre said that there was too much emphasis placed on the term "indivisibility of security" throughout our proposed text and that this has led some allies to equate it with the need for collective financing; that's why the French have proposed alternative language.

14. (S) Carre cited the points on which we are in agreement: namely, France expressing general support for our assessment of the threat, for missile defense as a way of combating the

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threat and for the U.S. contributions in this regard. The possibility of finding common language to go beyond this "will be much more complicated." Carre feared that the "careful choreography" that we had both been working on to find common agreement on missile defense had gone "off the road." He concluded the discussion by saying that it had not yet been decided that the alliance needs a NATO missile defense system, so any statement at Bucharest would need to use language sufficiently broad to "cover several possibilities" and not simply state that all the allies should be protected against missile attacks and NATO should be assuring that protection. He expressed hope that we could get the process back on track and find a compromise acceptable to all, while Mr. Errera expressed confidence that we could manage a solution. Carre also suggested that at least part of the problem was a matter of working in different languages and proposed that all concerned should in the future make clear the intent behind their proposed wording. Mr. Weinrod agreed, saying that what we are looking for at the Bucharest summit is a forward-looking statement where NATO can continue to build on defense protection and consider recommendations and options for the future.

15. (S) Comment: The French asserted that they were both surprised and taken aback by the disputes that arose during the February 4-8 working-level NATO groups in Brussels. The GOF considers the strong U.S. push to reach consensus on language by Vilnius that went beyond their acceptable limits was "not the deal" they believed they had with us to work on compromise language in time for Bucharest. While the costs of financing a missile defense system remain a real and genuine concern (particularly with the Bulgarians and Turks allegedly already pushing for common funding), this meeting made clear that the GOF still believes that a NATO-endorsement, if too specific, will obligate them to a major strategic decision that they are not yet prepared to make. The ongoing white paper review of defense and security priorities is one more element adding to this hesitation. Post recommends increased high-level engagement with Paris to shore up French support for a strong statement

on missile defense. End comment.

¶6. (U) W. Bruce Weinrod has cleared this cable.

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